

Introduction to Action Research

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Action Research

- **Action Research:** Systematic procedures to gather information about and improve teaching, student learning, and/or other educational processes
 - **Systematic:** (Next Slides)
 - **Procedures:** Research Design, Participants, Instruments, Procedures for Data Collection
 - **Gather Information:** All teaching practices should be based on a well-grounded foundation of information for best practices, NOT tradition or convenience
 - **Improve teaching, learning, educational processes:** Ultimate goal of action research

Foundation of Research: Potential Sources of Evidence

- **Authority**
 - According to Prof. Adetunde, most human beings have an external locus of causality.
- **Tradition**
 - Massaging babies helps them grow better.
- **Common Sense**
 - The more a person studies, the better grades they earn.
- **Rumor**
 - UniJos is increasing school fees.
- **Observation**
 - 98% of Nigerians like Maltina but only 2% of Americans like Maltina.

- Fully less than 10 percent of Nigerian university dons have children living in that mess called Nigeria, let alone inside the filthy chicken coops that pass for classrooms from preschool to the tertiary level...
- Ten percent? I made it up of course. I am a Nigerian intellectual. We are lazy like that. It could be less even.
- <http://xokigbo.wordpress.com/2013/09/21/asuu-is-on-strike-again-who-cares-smh/>

Foundation of Research

- Research only allows for data from **systematic observation**
 - All human beings make observations in their daily lives.
 - Based on these casual observations, all people develop theories about education, psychology, human behavior and thought, etc.
 - These observations are oftentimes very flawed because of the limited contexts in which the observations are made

Foundation of Research

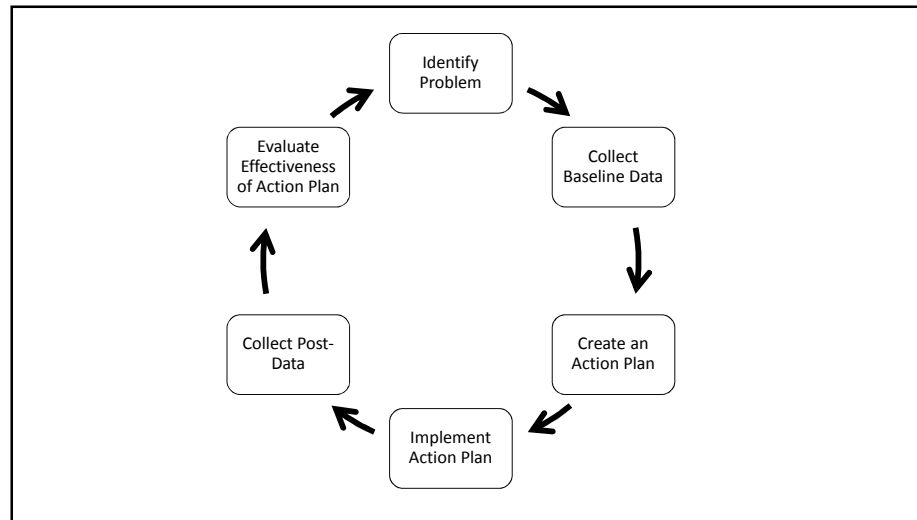
- Research seeks explanations of the world that expand beyond one person's biases through **systematic observation**
- Research methods are tools that enable researchers to make systematic observations beyond their own biases
- This helps researchers develop more accurate/truthful explanations of education, psychology, and human thought and behavior

Action Research

- **Goal:** Improved educational practice by:
 - A) Studying a problem in a classroom (or educational setting)
 - B) Systematically collecting data about the problem
 - C) Creating and implementing an action plan
 - D) Collecting data to reflect on the effectiveness of the action plan

Action Research

- **Key parts:**
 - Identify resolvable problem in education
 - Analyse the problem
 - Systematically collect data about the problem
 - Create an action plan to solve the problem
 - Systematically collect data about the effectiveness of the action plan
 - Reflect on whether the action plan was successful



Comparison of Action Research and Traditional Research

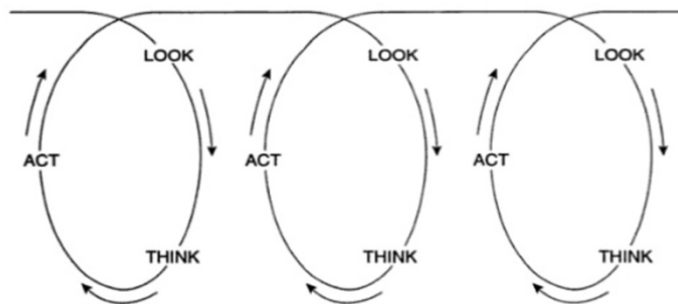
Traditional Research

- Goal: Generalize the conclusion beyond the sample to a target population
- Formal research procedures needed to ensure strict control of variables
- Identify problem based on review of research literature
- Requires considerable advanced training

Action Research

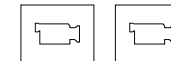
- Goal: Improve practice in one particular classroom/school
- Looser procedures to suit the context of research
- Identify actual problem within a particular classroom/school
- Can be done by any teacher/practitioner

Action Research Interacting Spiral (Stringer, 2007)



Action Research Process

- **Look:** Gather information for a well-grounded understanding of the experience and perspectives of the key participants
 - What is happening from the observer's perspective?
 - What is happening – and why – from the perspective of key stakeholders (e.g., students, teachers)?
- **Think:** Analyse what is happening to better understand the nature of the problem
 - Theorize about how/why the problem is existing
- **Act:** Develop an Action Plan
 - Implement the Action Plan
 - Evaluate the Action Plan → Collect data to evaluate the effectiveness
- Cycle back into Look



Tentative Practicum Timetable

Week	Activity	Goal
1	Look: Participant Observation	Identify a relevant problem in the placement
2	Think: Gather Information	Collect baseline data on the problem
3	Think: Create Action Plan	Have a well-designed Action Plan
4-5	Act: Implement Action Plan	
6	Look: Gather Information	Collect post-intervention data to determine the effectiveness of the problem
	Think: Evaluate Action Plan	Evaluate the effectiveness of the Action Plan via written report